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R 270755Z FEB 09
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3413
RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC 8177
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5392
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 9231
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5283
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHHMUNA/USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI

UNCLAS SEOUL 000309

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/PD FOR SWALKER, EAP/P, EAP/K
STATE PASS USDA ELECTRONICALLY FOR FAX/ITP SCHEIKH
STATE PASS USTR FOR RCASSIDY
USDOC FOR 4430/IEP/OPB/EAP/JDONIUS
TREASURY FOR OASIA/MGREWE
CINCPAC FOR J-74

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [ECON](#) [KS](#) [US](#) [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION IN SEOUL

Subject: Media Reaction; Seoul

Global Economy

"Bracing for Global Protectionism"

Conservative Dong-a Ilbo editorialized (02/27): "Experts warn that the spread of protectionism will hamper global economic recovery. Protectionism will lead to a vicious cycle of retaliation and eventually undermine the concerted global effort to overcome the financial crisis. Protectionism is also raising its ugly head even in the financial sector. Advanced economies are reluctant to take drastic measures to eliminate protectionism for fear that their massive financial bailouts will feed insolvent foreign companies. The ROKG should take advantage of its co-chairing of the G20 meeting this year and do everything it can to take the initiative in setting the agenda and create an atmosphere conducive to removing protectionist trade barriers."

North Korea

"The Only Way Out"

Senior Columnist Kim Young-hie opined in right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo: "There are two ways for North Korea to become rich by launching a 'satellite,' which is just another name the communist state uses for a missile. First, it can earn dollars selling missiles to other countries like Iran and Syria. Second, it can also scare the U.S. with its missile capacity into hurriedly normalizing ties and accepting Pyongyang's possession of nuclear weapons. If Washington-Pyongyang relations are normalized, North Korea thinks that it will be able to collect a huge amount of dollars from Japan, the EU and international financial institutions. However, since the Sept. 11 attacks, the U.S., whether under a Republican or a Democratic administration, has made it clear that it won't accept rogue states trading in weapons of mass destruction. When it comes to North Korea, Washington is more concerned about proliferation through exports of nuclear weaponry and missiles than about the North actually possessing nuclear arms. Pyongyang's plan to become better off by selling missiles and missile technology would, in fact, cause the poor country to go bankrupt. Instead of becoming prosperous by test-launching a satellite, or a missile in disguise, North Korea will only provide firmer ground for anti-Pyongyang hardliners in the United States and the ROK to stand

on. It will also give the U.S. a good reason to enhance its missile defense system."

Stephens